

**Butler, Jennie C**

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**From:** Andy Wadsworth [APWadsworth@WEGMANS.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 20, 1999 8:32 PM  
**To:** 'FDA'  
**Subject:** Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)



Dockets Management  
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Please accept these comments for Docket Nos: 98N-1230, 96P-0418, 97P-0197

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1-800-934-6267, ext 6912.

Thank you.

Andy Wadsworth

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96P-0418

EC6

We propose that companies who follow a state or national quality assurance plan that includes environmental testing should be exempt from the wording "Eggs may contain harmful bacteria known to cause serious illness, especially in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems."

Wegmans approach has always been to educate the consumer about foods, not scare them away. We support a more positive approach such as an information panel, not a warning statement, to indicate raw egg safe handling information.

For your protection

Keep Eggs Refrigerated

Wash hands before and after handling raw food products

Cook raw foods thoroughly

This would give the consumer the necessary tools to prepare eggs or any raw food safely.

Wegmans has supported the egg industry and the regulatory agencies in their efforts to reduce the number of foodborne illnesses associated with SE in shell eggs and egg products through science-based and coordinated regulation, inspection, enforcement, research, and education programs. In an article that appeared in the September issue of Egg Industry Magazine, the CDC says the number of SE outbreaks from all sources has steadily declined from a high of 77 in 1984 to 44 in 1997. Outbreaks linked to shell eggs have steadily declined to a low of 17 in the same period. Additionally, there has been a 44% decrease in the incidence of SE from eggs in the last three years, according to 1998 FoodNet System for Surveillance. Please continue with these positive efforts to reduce SE instead of developing scare tactics to keep people from eating eggs.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely yours,

Andrew Wadsworth  
Egg Farm Manager  
Wegmans Food Markets

Mary Ellen Burris  
Director of Consumer Affairs  
Wegmans Food Markets

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, rm. 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docket Nos: 98N-1230, 96P-0418, and 97P-0197

Dear Sir or Madam:

Wegmans Food Markets, a grocery chain located in Rochester, New York, with 59 stores located in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, would like to comment on the proposed mandatory labeling of egg cartons.

Wegmans is very unique in many ways, but one distinction we have is truly caring for our customers. Danny Wegman, our company President, was very concerned about the E-Coli problem with hamburger. He challenged our meat director to find a supplier to guarantee that the meat was free from E coli O157.H7. No supplier could accept the challenge, so our Consumer Affairs Department launched a program a year ago, to make consumers aware of the problem and alert them with a bright yellow label on every package of ground beef, stating "Cook to 160°F. Cooking ground beef to 160°F. eliminates harmful bacteria which could cause serious or fatal illness."

One of the other distinctions Wegmans has is owning our own Egg Farm in Wolcott, New York. Our Egg Farm was started in 1967 and today we have capacity for 850,000 layers. Wegmans is proud that our eggs are supplied from our own farm, are AA grade, and meet all the requirements of the New York State Egg Quality Assurance Program. Due to these facts, Danny Wegman has not had our Consumer Affairs Department launch a program about Salmonella Enteritidis, (SE), because he has a high confidence level that our customers are not being exposed to the bacteria because of the extensive efforts being taken at the Egg Farm. Environmental testing of pullet and layer houses began in 1991. The program requirements we now follow under the New York Egg Quality Assurance Plan are:

1. Obtaining chicks from US Sanitation Monitored SE negative breeder flocks.
2. Swabbing every tenth chick delivery container at time of delivery
3. Pullet facilities manure cultured at 10 to 15 weeks of age. 2 swabs per cage row
4. Laying house manure and egg belts are cultured 8 weeks prior to scheduled flock replacement. 2 swabs manure, 2 swabs egg belts each side.
5. All pullet and layer buildings are hot water washed and disinfected between flocks.

Wegmans Egg Farm has never tested positive for Salmonella Enteritidis.

With the history and reputation of supplying the freshest, AA quality, safe eggs for over 30 years, what benefit is it to our consumers by placing a warning label on our egg cartons that will indite us in the consumers mind that Wegmans eggs might make them sick.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION  
**CROSS REFERENCE SHEET**

Docket Number/Item Code: 98N-1230/EC6

See Docket Number/Item Code: 97P-0197/EC6  
96P-0418/EC6